1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

By the end of the century the struggle had resolved itself into extremes. Mizzi and his followers resorted to continuous legislative obstruction as the only but rather unworthy weapon left for what they maintained was a fight for responsible government. Strickland as Chief Secretary pointed correctly to the damaging effects such tactics were having on all policies including those of education, public health, etc., but conducted an offensive/defensive battle on equally intransigeant lines. Meanwhile British, Imperial as opposed to economic, effort was at its climacteric and Malta as a fortress, whose only value was as a fortress, had to 'suffer' the consequences; a necessary qualification must be made that this really entailed only subordination in status and was accompanied by great advances in all that the mid-twentieth century would term 'welfare services'.

In 1903 Anglo-Italian relations were good and improving, the Crown and the Vatican, Governor and Archbishop all in amity, while in Malta, 180,000 people had 10,000 enfranchised electors of whom less than 4,000 ever voted. In the Legislative Council, however, tempers were at blazing point and obstruction produced deadlock. Followed Chamberlain's bombshell abrogating the constitution. With effect from 3rd June the Governor's Executive Council and the official group within the Council of Government were given majority power and complete control over policy and action. The reserve powers were re-invoked in all their strength. Malta entered the Modern Age in an unhappy political state, a state vocally resented by a few, ignored by the apathetic majority and a cause of unhappy puzzlement to Westminster.

In retrospect, to the writer at least, the most amazing feature of these developments appears to be their inevitability. Judged in isolation, it may appear facile to suggest that with the stage as set in preceding centuries, with players such natural 'typecast' products of past experience, no other play could have been produced. Judged along with the other evidence, the unity, the cohesion of all things Maltese do make it rather difficult to subscribe here to a doctrine of free-will.

Of the elements in Maltese social life most affected by institutional forces two are of very relevant interest to us, viz. public health and education. Some brief consideration is therefore given to the main developments of these sectors.

As noted in Chapter VI A the death rate in the Maltese Islands fluctuated considerably but showed a slowly accelerating decline. During the century that elapsed between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the beginning of World War I, the main health improvements resulted from public works construction of a piped water-supply and sewerage systems in the most populated parts of the island of Malta. Developments in preventive remedial medicine and in disease control were slower mainly because of their greater dependence on trained medical staff and on public acceptance of new ideas.

At the mid-nineteenth century conditions were not very propitious for the consideration of suggestions for reducing mortality. Forecasts of impending Malthusian catastrophe were combined with diatribes on the improvidence of early marriage in many surveys by articulate Maltese of a presumed state of overpopulation. The inarticulate members of society continued to regard as normal conditions of which Sutherland (5) said: 'I have very seldom met with conditions so obviously injurious to health, and so likely to determine outbreaks of epidemic disease as those presented by many houses'. In Valletta the Knights had built a sewerage system and a piped water supply but pollution of the latter by the former was common. In the villages, the deficiency of water, refuse accumulation and the use of 'ordure rooms' were a product of ignorance and a cause of ill-health.

The Cholera epidemic of 1865 which slew 3,600 people eventually forced action upon the Government and after much general discussion a Commission of Public Health was appointed in 1874. Significantly enough, attention was focussed on the high rate of child mortality: in that same year, of over 4,000 recorded deaths, more than 2,000 were of children under five years of age. Between 1874 and the end of the century a series of reports put the blame on a series of associated factors. The ancient Three Cities and the new unrestricted

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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642 more, because Imperial strategic interests limited the terms of
648 reference of these councils, the constitutions permitted only the most rudimentary form of government. Only under the 1887 Constitution did elected members outnumber official members. But this elected majority had no effective power and finally proved so awkward that in 1903 a new constitution reinstated an official majority.

64 After the First World War, there was popular agitation for a
[579] more liberal form of government. In 1919, the social unrest culminated in an anti-British riot during which British troops killed four demonstrators. Later that year, Britain announced that Malta would receive a more liberal constitution. The new constitution, which eventually came into force in 1921, attempted to reconcile two conflicting principles: continued British control over her strategic island-fortress, and Maltese self-government. The complicated solution which Britain adopted was dyarchy, under which effective legislative and executive power was divided between the Governor and the representatives of the Maltese people. This created two separate governments.

The Imperial Government dealt with 'Reserved Matters', which included defence, foreign relations, immigration and coinage. The Malta Government consisted of a seventeen-member Senate and a Legislative Assembly of 32 members. The Senate was composed of representatives of the clergy, the nobility, the University, the Chamber of Commerce and the Trade Union Council. The members of the Legislative Assembly and seven members of the Senate were elected by adult males, subject to certain minimal property or educational restrictions.

[666]

The 1921 Constitution was suspended in 1930 and again in 1933, and finally revoked in 1936. In spite of a new constitution in 1939, the islands remained effectively under Governor's rule until representative government was restored after the war. The 1947 Constitution again provided dyarchy, but it did not resurrect the cumbersome Senate. The new Legislative Assembly consisted of forty members elected by universal suffrage from eight electoral districts. In 1958, the government resigned following the collapse of talks with Britain over a proposal to 'integrate' Malta more closely with the United Kingdom. As the leader of the opposition refused to form a new government, the Governor suspended and then revoked the constitution.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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000 197 648 668 [665] political issues to the masses. The pro-Italian group came to dominate the elected members, and blocked the affairs of government to such an extent that Britain re-established the official majority.

Britain did not succeed until many years later in implementing the recommendations of the Keenan Report. The language of instruction in the primary schools remained English or Italian, at the option of a student's parents – the so-called '*pari-passu*' system. In 1921, Britain attempted to remove language from the political arena by stipulating in the new constitution 'that nothing shall be done by way of legislation or administration which shall diminish or detract from the position of English as an official language or to reduce its use in education or in the public service.'[1]

197 665 668 For the first six years after the 1921 Constitution was promulgated, the government was in the hands of the political groups which eventually merged into the Nationalist Party: Monsignor Panzavecchia's 'Unione Maltese' and the 'Partito Democratico Nazionalista' led by Enrico Mizzi. The newly-formed Labour Party at first supported the Nationalists, but later became a firm ally of Strickland's Constitutional Party. Monsignor Michael Gonzi, now Archbishop of Malta, was a representative of the Labour Party until he became Bishop of Gozo in 1924. During this early period, the only serious political skirmish occurred, not surprisingly, over the 1923 Pari-Passu Bill by which the Nationalists introduced both English and Italian as compulsory subjects in the elementary schools. Strickland attacked the bill on the ground that it made no provision to teach Maltese, the language of the masses. He maintained that without a firm knowledge of their own language, children could never learn two foreign languages at the same time. Although the British at first declared that this act was contrary to the spirit of the constitution, it was allowed to become law. [648]

665 666 The Constitutional Party, supported by the Labour Party, won the 1927 general elections, and Strickland became Prime Minister. The elections, however, were marred by an incident which embittered the relations between Strickland's supporters and their opponents. On the day before the election, the Nationalists circulated thousands of copies of a perjured affidavit which declared that Strickland was a Freemason. Although the perjurer, a

[1] Section 57.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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notorious criminal whom the Nationalists hid until after the elections, was later convicted, the accusation jarred the solidly Catholic electorate and undoubtedly cost Strickland many votes.

In the years that followed this election, Malta was torn by an unprecedented political struggle between the Strickland Government and the Church. Since this dispute in many ways foreshadowed the present conflict between the Church and the Malta Labour Party, it is worth while to examine it in some detail.

While Strickland was the leader of the opposition, he made frequent attacks, both from the floor and through his newspapers, on the priests sitting in the Assembly. He maintained that the clergy should not take part in politics. In doing this he made many enemies, for his attacks were often bitter and insulting. For example, he once offered a cash prize to the person who gave him the best reason for having the Bishop of Gozo removed from office. On another occasion, he announced that for a small sum of money, even a horse could become a Papal Marquis.

Relations between Strickland and the Church, already strained, deteriorated rapidly after he became Prime Minister. When the two monsignori who represented the Archbishop in the Senate voted against his first budget, he considered that the Church had declared war on him. This was followed by a public demonstration against the Archbishop. At the same time, Strickland also launched a blistering attack through his newspapers on the two clerical Senators. Following this, there was a whole series of petty disputes which culminated in the famous Father Carta case.

Father Carta, a Sardinian monk, had been sent to Malta by the Superior General of the Franciscan Conventuals to resolve a disciplinary problem in one of the Order's Maltese convents. He soon discovered that a certain Maltese monk, Father Guido Micallef, was one of the principal trouble-makers, and arranged for his transfer to the Order's house in Liverpool. At this point Strickland intervened. He asserted that Father Micallef was being exiled because he had supported the Constitutional Party in the 1927 elections, and refused to issue the necessary exit permit. The Church was furious at this interference in what it regarded as its internal affairs. In the wrangle which followed, both the Governor and the Archbishop became involved, Father Micallef was expelled from the Order and defrocked, and the Cabinet asked the Governor to petition the Holy See to investigate the incident.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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A Papal Delegate visited Malta and concluded that the differences between the government and the Church could best be settled by means of a concordat. During most of the year following the Papal Delegate's visit, Britain tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a concordat and to get the Holy See to forbid the Maltese clergy to take part in the general elections scheduled for May 1930. The Vatican, however, declared that Strickland was not *persona grata* and that as long as he remained in power, a concordat was not possible.

In Malta, the relations between the Strickland Government and the Church went from bad to worse. In April 1930, two Constitutional Party Ministers gathered many sworn statements that Monsignor Gonzi, the Bishop of Gozo, had instructed priests to preach against the Constitutional Party and to refuse absolution to its supporters. This inquiry greatly angered the Church. On the first of May, the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo issued a joint pastoral which forbade people to vote for Strickland or those candidates who supported him. In view of the spiritual sanctions that threatened people who voted for the candidates of one of the two major parties, Britain had no option but to cancel the elections. It subsequently suspended the constitution, but kept the Strickland ministers on as advisers.

A Royal Commission went to Malta to investigate the trouble. Following its report, Britain restored the constitution and abolished the teaching of Italian in primary schools. In June 1932 the Nationalists defeated Strickland and his supporters in a bitterly contested election in which 96 per cent of the electorate voted. However, their period in office was very brief. The Governor dismissed them in November 1933 for deliberately evading the constitutional provisions regarding language, for they had set about to re-establish the primacy of Italian in the educational system and the civil service. Once again the administration of the islands became the responsibility of the Governor.

During the fourteen years of Governor's rule which followed, the deep wounds caused by the long, harsh political conflict slowly healed. The first Italian bombs of the war finally killed the language dispute. The united defence effort and the common suffering caused by the prolonged bombardment further helped to reunite political rivals and suppress parochial quarrels. Britain awarded the people of Malta and Gozo the George Cross for

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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their heroism, and after the war restored representative government.

In the first election under the new constitution, the people voted overwhelmingly for the Labour Party, then led by Dr. Paul Boffa. But in 1949 a disagreement between Dr. Boffa and his Minister of Public Works and Reconstruction, Mr. Dom Mintoff, split the party. The Nationalists, with the support of Dr. Boffa's new Workers' Party, formed the next few governments. Dom Mintoff's Malta Labour Party gradually swallowed the Workers' Party and finally defeated the Nationalists in the 1955 general election.

There was almost constant friction between the Church and the Mintoff Government during the three years it was in office. From the outset, Mintoff showed himself reluctant to submit to the authority of the Church. His refusal to pay the traditional call on the Archbishop, Monsignor Gonzi, when he took office was symbolic of this independence. Many incidents contributed to the disagreement between the two, which grew more intense as both became more outspoken in their criticism of each other. Perhaps the most serious clash occurred over the Archbishop's stand on the Government's proposal to link Malta more closely with Britain. On the eve of a referendum concerning this proposal, Monsignor Gonzi made a broadcast in which he said that he could not support the integration proposal because Mintoff had failed (whether by design or circumstance is an open question) to secure adequate guarantees from Britain to protect the position of the Roman Catholic religion. In spite of this, the electorate supported Mintoff's proposal; but relations between the Labour Party and the Archbishop remained strained.

Then, shortly before he resigned, Mintoff sparked off a sharp dispute with the Church by hanging in the National Museum a painting taken from St. John's Co-Cathedral. Originally, the government had sent the painting, a Caravaggio, to Italy to be restored. But the government seized it when it returned and declared that since the Co-Cathedral was government property, the painting was a national treasure that should be properly cared for and displayed to the public. In the course of the acrimonious dispute which followed, Mintoff, who had appealed the matter to the Vatican, was ordered by the Holy See to return the painting. He finally returned it on the night before he resigned.

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which does not have these honours. Other honours are the right to perform rituals, indulgence to persons visiting the church, and particular ecclesiastical offices. To a considerable extent these are rewards for meritorious conduct, measured by contributions to the decorations of the church, or the number of vocations, or special devotions performed in a parish.

During certain religious processions and ceremonies this ranking becomes an important determinant of the order in which the participants take part. Formerly, during the annual St. Gregory procession, virtually the entire hierarchy of Malta could be seen lined up on the ground. But this procession of parishes was abolished and the ceremony modified in 1927, among other reasons because of a dispute between the Canons of Senglea and Birkirkara over a question of precedence. But the St. Gregory procession in Gozo is still held every March. Then it is possible to see parish following parish in order of precedence, and the confraternities of each, in their turn, ranked according to their position in their own parish hierarchy. At the front of the procession is the youngest parish, the one with the lowest rank. It is followed by parishes in ascending order of seniority until the oldest Collegiate Chapter. Then come the religious orders. These are followed by the clergy of the Cathedral and the Monsignori of the Cathedral Chapter. The celebrant or Bishop brings up the end of the procession. This inverted order of precedence is an important organizational principle, which operates in the secular as well as the religious sphere, and it is one of the basic causes of disputes between villages and band clubs.

III

At present there are six political parties in Malta. Of these, only three contested the 1955 elections: the Nationalist Party (NP), led by Dr. Giorgio Borg Olivier; the Malta Labour Party (MLP), whose leader is Dom Mintoff; and Miss Mabel Strickland's Progressive Constitutional Party (PCP). The election resulted in 23 seats for the MLP, 17 for the NP and none for the PCP. Three new parties have emerged since the resignation from office of the MLP in 1958: the Democratic Nationalist Party (DNP), led by Dr. Herbert Ganado, split from the Nationalist Party; Anthony Pellegrini, a former Secretary of the Labour Party, founded the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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665 Christian Workers' Party (CWP); and Chev. George Ransley started up the Democratic Christian Party (DCP).

665 Of these six parties, only one, the Malta Labour Party, incor-
● 666 porates the villages on a permanent basis in its organizational framework. The other five parties are loosely organized. Their structure can be seen most clearly just before an election. At the top of each there is the party executive. Below that are the candidates from the electoral districts. (Under the 1947 Constitution there were eight electoral districts each returning five representatives; the 1961 Constitution increased the number to ten.) The candidates from the various electoral districts work out their campaign strategy with their national executives. Each candidate, in his turn, tries to appoint canvassers or agents in each important village in his district. Some canvassers are paid, and have represented other candidates and parties before. Thus at the village level it is pretty much every candidate for himself. This is particularly true when there are several candidates from a single party canvassing votes in the same village. If the party is successful, the chain from canvasser, through the local member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), to Cabinet Minister, serves as a channel for requests and patronage. The party structure is thus strengthened and given a degree of permanence. But if the party is defeated or, if elected, it resigns, or the constitution is suspended, it ceases to be an operative organization at the village level. None of these parties have permanently organized village committees or clubs, though there are Nationalist Party clubs in a few towns. In the past, a few band clubs became identified with specific parties and
[575] served as local centres for the party. This often occurred when prominent band club members became successful party politicians. But the linkage between a village band club and a particular party was coincidental. Moreover, only rarely did all the members of such a band club support the political party with which its leaders were aligned. The above, in rather general terms, is a rough description of the structure of five of the six Maltese political parties in 1961. The Labour Party is the exception.

665 The Labour Party was the first to reorganize itself immediately after the war. During the period between 1949 and 1955, when the Nationalists and Dr. Boffa's Workers' Party carried on a coalition government, Dom Mintoff further reorganized and strengthened the Malta Labour Party. Its structure was greatly

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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of new associations in the village and the increased activity of political parties.

During the mid-'fifties emigration drained away many of the most active supporters of the partiti. In 1954 alone, no fewer than two dozen men between 18 and 38 left the village for Australia and Canada. Each club lost key bandsmen, and the two bands, already heavily bolstered with outside players, never recovered. A constantly improving bus service enabled young men to go to the 'talkies' in other villages, or just stroll up and down Kingsway in Valletta – a very popular pastime with young people from all over Malta – instead of spending the evening in their village clubs. During this period the Football Club, MUSEUM and Catholic Action were established in the village and began to draw potential partit leaders into other spheres of activity. The Football Club was particularly damaging in this respect. As a neutral social club it provided a place where the young men of the two partiti, who normally never entered one another's clubs, could meet. A number of friendships developed between them, and it soon became the most popular club in the village. Finally, the increased activity of the national political parties during the elections in 1950, 1951, 1953 and 1955 drew the attention of the villagers away from purely parochial concerns and bound them up in rivalries of a different order, which often cut across traditional allegiances. This created factions within the clubs and weakened the partiti.

Rivalry flared up again in 1960, when the supporters of St. Martin, intent upon celebrating the centenary of their patron, staged the greatest festa in the history of the village. But the political and religious fervour of the 1961 election campaign soon captured the attention of the partisans, and the festa of the following year was a pale shadow of the gala spectacle of the year before.

Before proceeding any further, we must unravel the rather complicated tangle of partit, club and confraternity. All festa partiti are composed of three groups: (i) the band club, which provides the leadership of the partit and includes most of the active male supporters, many of whom are also members of (ii) the confraternity allied with the partit or dedicated to its patron, and (iii) the rank and file of men, women and children who are members neither of the confraternity nor of the club, but still support the partit against its rival. The central strand running through all

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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142
291
482
516
666

6. 'Viva San Ġużepp!'

[facing P. 81]

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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CHAPTER VII

National Politics and the Village

In the last few years issues of national policy have taken an increasingly important place in the villages alongside the purely parochial ones we discussed in the preceding two chapters. Divisions based on opposed political ideologies are now reflected in the groups and associations in which people spend their time. The major division which cuts across all Maltese villages is based not so much upon rivalry between political parties, as upon the present conflict between the Malta Labour Party and the Church. But as has been observed, conflict between the Church and a political party is not new to Malta. It also existed during the late 'twenties and early 'thirties.

The dispute between the Labour Party and the Church is essentially a struggle for power. Dom Mintoff, the Labour leader, accuses the Archbishop Gonzi of siding with Britain to maintain Malta's colonial status, and with interfering in politics by attacking the Labour Party and its leaders. In its 1962 Electoral Manifesto the MLP proclaims the right of a person 'to fulfil his civic duty without pseudo-religious interference'; sees as a crime 'any interference with the right of a democratically elected majority to implement the people's mandate', and advocates the 'abolition of medieval privileges which have retarded [the country's] social and economic progress.'[1] The Church sees this not only as a direct attack on the basic right and duty of a bishop to teach and to guard the morals of his flock,[2] but also as a move to destroy its traditional position in Maltese society. In particular it fears that if the Labour Party were returned to power, it would enact legislation which would render the Archbishop liable to prosecution before the criminal court if he were to comment on the political issues of the day.

These opposing views are expressed in the slogans written on

[1] See Appendix B for the 1962 MLP Electoral Manifesto.
[2] Cf. William E. Addis and others, 'Bishop', *A Catholic Dictionary*, pp. 80 ff.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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463 Grand Harbour and first establish themselves in the conurbation
467 surrounding it has helped to keep the farmer devoutly tied to the
665 Church. For this reason the action of the MLP in challenging the authority of the Bishops is as abhorrent to him as it is difficult to understand.

463 The recent sanctions of the Church have increased the class
578 alignment of those who support the Labour Party and those who oppose it. This is largely because those with high social status have
665 more to lose than industrial workers, and are thus more vulner-
795 able to the pressure of public opinion and the Church. The increasingly heavy pressure of the Church has forced many of the
[626] young professionals and intellectuals to abandon the party for which they voted in 1955. But even when the MLP was in office, its policies began to alarm many in the professional and middle classes. They objected not only to Mintoff's attitude to the Church, but also to the somewhat abrupt way his government occasionally dealt with the professional and business communities. Many were disturbed by the MLP's rather sudden switch from advocating integration with Britain to demanding complete independence. As most of those who left the party or became inactive in it were moderates, both in their approach to the Church and to the economic and political problems facing Malta, the MLP has become more extreme in its outlook. This in turn
[656] induced others to leave it. This process was accelerated by the regulations which prohibited the better-educated civil servants from taking an active part in the political life of their country.

463 Table 7 below shows the rough correlation between occupa-
665 tional class and support of the Malta Labour Party. In particular, it demonstrates that as the proportion of skilled workers decreases,
666 so does the proportion of voters who support Labour. Other variables are the number of professionals and farmers. The Second and Fourth Electoral Districts polled the highest number of Labour votes in the 1962 election, and the Sixth and Tenth the lowest. The MLP polled 56 per cent of the total votes in the Second Electoral District, where 45 per cent of the working population are classified as skilled labourers.

In contrast, it received only 6 per cent of the votes in Gozo, where only 16 per cent of the people are skilled labourers, but 38 per cent are engaged in agriculture. Another important variable is the number of clergy resident in a district. The relatively high

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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proportion of clerics and nuns in the Sixth Electoral District helps to explain the relatively low Labour poll there. It is also a significant factor in explaining the overwhelming defeat of the MLP in Gozo. These two districts have the highest proportion of clerics in the country. The Fourth District, in contrast, has the lowest.

TABLE 7. 1962 Elections:
Occupational Class and Voting Behaviour[1]

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS[2]	SELECTED OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES (As percentage of total lab. force)			PERCENTAGE LABOUR VOTES
	Professional[3]	*Skilled*	*Agricultural*	
IInd (Senglea, etc.)	4 (3)	45	4	56
IVth (Zurrieq, etc.)	3 (2)	34	11	47
VIth (Birkirkara, etc.)	6 (4)	33	11	24
Xth (Gozo)	7 (6)	16	38	6
All Districts	5 (3)	32	11	34

IV

It will have been observed that there is a certain superficial similarity between the reasons given here for belonging to the MLP and those suggested in the preceding chapter for recruitment into the secondary festa partiti. One might expect therefore that in comparison with titular partiti, secondary partiti would have a higher proportion of Labour supporters among their members. Unfortunately, owing to the disturbed political situation prevailing at the time, I was not able to gather satisfactory systematic data on this point. Almost all informants with whom I discussed the matter suggested that secondary partiti did in fact have more pro-Mintoff members than their rivals. But the situation is not quite as straightforward as it might appear. To begin with, the statements of informants varied according to their own political beliefs and their position in relation to the festa partiti. Rivals generally tried to place each other in an unfavourable light. Thus an anti-MLP member of a band club supporting a titular feast

[1] Source: *1957 Census: Report on Economic Activities*, pp. 40–111; and *The Malta Government Gazette* (3 March 1962), pp. 585–94.

[2] *IInd* (Cospicua, Senglea, Vittoriosa, Kalkara, Zabbar, M'skala), *IVth* (Zurrieq, Safi, Qrendi, Mqabba, Kirkop, B'bugia, Zejtun, M'xlokk), *VIth* (Birkirkara, Balzan, Lija, Attard, Naxxar, Gharghur).

[3] Percentage of priests, monks and nuns in parenthesis.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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1962 elections, three-fourths are members of the professional classes. The remainder are persons who, for the most part, have risen to positions of influence through party and trade union hierarchies.

TABLE 8. Occupation of Candidates Elected to the 1962 Malta Legislative Assembly

OCCUPATION	POLITICAL PARTY				
	Nationalist	*Labour*	*Other*	*Total*	*Percentage*
Professional	24	9	5	38	76
Administrative	1	4	2	7	14
Skilled Labour	—	3	2	5	10
Total	25	16	9	50	100

The way a political candidate recruits a following depends upon his status and party. All candidates recruit support through their relatives and friends; and all usually have a following in their own villages outside this circle of relatives. To get this, they must usually be successful politicians at the village level. It is for this reason that so many politicians are also presidents of local band and social clubs, and even of some of the lay apostolate societies. Next, every candidate must establish contact with the people in his electoral district outside the village. Since there are usually at least five candidates from each party standing in every district, each normally concentrates his campaign on one part of the district. He does this by making frequent rounds of all the band and social clubs and important wine shops in his territory. There he listens to complaints and requests and, in general, tries to establish a reputation as a generous and approachable person without committing himself to do specific favours. But above all, it is important for him to meet many people, for the Maltese voter does not like to give his first vote to a person he, or at least some member of his immediate family, does not know personally. Finally, all candidates tour their districts just before the election and make speeches.

Candidates who are doctors, lawyers, notaries, architects and so on, have a decided advantage. As professionals, they already have close personal contact with a large number of clients, many of whom are bound to them by debts, or obligated to them for help and favours. These obligations are important, for the Maltese villager does not like to receive something for nothing, and he

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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557 662 666 does not rest easily until he has repaid it. This is as true of corporate groups such as the band clubs as it is of individuals. Frequently the financial circumstances of the client, or the very nature of the favour, make it difficult or impossible for him to meet his obligation. His vote, and those of his family, provide the logical and accepted means to this end. This extends the relationship between patron and client to include that between politician and constituent.

66 Candidates who do not have the professional qualifications or high status necessary to recruit a following in this way are at a disadvantage. This is especially true for many of the Labour Party candidates, whose education and social standing at times compare unfavourably with those of their rivals. It was principally to overcome this handicap that the Labour Party sought to strengthen the party at the expense of individual candidates. It did this by limiting the system of political patronage which prevailed under previous governments and curbing the influence of the canvassers. In fact, the MLP officially forbade its candidates to employ canvassers. (Though, of course, many candidates have informal canvassers in their friends, relatives and clients.) At the same time, the party directed its propaganda at building up the image of the party and its leader. Labour supporters were constantly urged to vote for the party and not for individuals. By and large its campaign has been most successful. Its sympathizers not only vote for candidates who do not conform to the traditional image of the professional patron-politician, but they also vote across class lines, i.e. the teacher voting for an ex-dockyard fitter.

578 621 65 666 All candidates have to take into account the parochial rivalries which often cut across their districts. This is particularly true of the rivalry between the festa partiti. It has been noted that there is often a political polarity between festa partiti in the same village, and that sometimes the rivalry is so strong that partisans vote against a political party simply because a leading member of the rival partit is a candidate for it. But the number of people who place loyalty to their festa partit before support of a political party is declining. Nonetheless, if parochial rivalry no longer determines which party will get the votes, it very often decides which of the candidates within the party will. Many people have assured me that it is almost unheard of for a member of a festa partit to vote for a member of the rival partit, even though both support the

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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same political party. Thus a politician who is also a leading member of a festa partit always asks a rival candidate from his party to come to his village and canvass the party votes from the opposite festa partit.

Most people believe that politicians trade promises to assist festa partiti in return for votes. One well-known Labour politician who is the leader of the secondary festa partit in his own village, made such a promise to gain the support of a neighbouring secondary partit that was facing eviction. In return for the votes of the partit, he offered to introduce a bill into the Legislative Assembly which would prevent landlords from evicting band clubs. The proposition appealed to the partit and the bill, which gained a great deal of support for the Labour Party from other clubs as well, became law.[1] In fact, it was one of the first laws the MLP enacted after it was returned to office in 1955. Partly as a result of his promise of assistance, but also because of his keen interest in the problems of secondary festa partiti, this candidate became so identified with this neighbouring partit that he had to ask MLP candidates from the other side of the electoral district to bid for the Labour votes of the members of the opposite partit. He naturally asked them to canvass the Labour votes of the titular partit in his own village as well.

But perhaps the most famous case of this kind, and certainly the most conspicuous, took place in Gozo. For many years the supporters of the Leone partit in Rabat had been embarrassed by the fact that the statue of their beloved patron could not be taken in processions from the cathedral. There was simply no way for her to pass through the walls of the old citadel in which the cathedral was situated. The members of the partit wished to remedy this by breaching the wall and making a large gate, but the Antiquities Board strongly opposed the idea. Finally, an ambitious MLP candidate came to their rescue. He is alleged to have promised them help if they voted for him. Whether the deal for votes is true I do not know. I do know, however, that the politician was elected and succeeded in having a huge new gate torn in the historic citadel. That he did this at public expense, against the orders of his Ministers and in defiance of the Antiquities Board, is evidence of his ingenuity and single-mindedness. Of course, it might also have

[1] Act V, 1955: 'An Act to Amend the Reletting of Urban Property (Regulation) Ordinance.'

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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been due to the amount of pressure that the partit brought to bear on him.

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But popularity, close contact with the electorate and the support of his party and festa partit are not always enough to assure the success of a candidate. In order to understand why this is so, it is necessary to examine the electoral process. The system of voting which has been used in Malta since 1921 is proportional representation with the single transferable vote. The country is divided into ten electoral districts, each of which returns five representatives to the Legislative Assembly. The districts are based on population density, and each averages about 15,000 registered voters. A candidate need not be resident in a district in order to stand for election there, and he can stand in two districts at the same time. If he is successful in both, he relinquishes one seat, which is then filled by a member of his party chosen in a by-election. At the polling booth each voter is given a ballot paper listing all the candidates standing in the district, and is required to rank them by placing a number against the name of each, to indicate the order of preference. After the polling is finished, all the ballot boxes from a district are opened simultaneously and the ballot papers mixed. The votes are then counted. As each paper is opened, a single vote is credited to the candidate to whom the voter has given first preference. This is the first count. A candidate is declared elected if he receives a certain proportion of the total number of votes cast.[1] After the first count the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and his votes are redistributed in accordance with the second preferences. The votes are then retotalled for the second count. The candidate with the lowest number of votes is again eliminated, and his votes are redistributed for the third count. The elimination of candidates and the redistribution of their votes continues until five candidates receive the required quota of votes.

Few candidates are elected on the first count, for the first preferences of the voters are generally distributed among a large number. First preferences reflect the popularity of a candidate and the size of his following, but the secondary votes he receives are

[1] This quota, the Droop quota, is one plus the total number of votes cast, divided by the number of seats (5) plus one.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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critical to his election. Successful politicians repeatedly stressed to me the importance of carefully cultivating secondary preferences. As one put it, 'The first preferences keep you from being eliminated, but the secondary ones elect you.' The votes a candidate gets on subsequent counts are the result of his ability (i) to bargain with other candidates for the secondary preferences of their followers, and (ii) to set up a network of personal canvassers to secure these secondary preferences from the supporters of candidates who do not wish to release them to him. One technique that all candidates use is to encourage popular village figures to stand as mock candidates for vote-getting purposes. The understanding is that the politician is to receive their secondary preferences if they are defeated, as they usually are, since they are not generally known outside their villages. In exchange for these votes, the professional politician generally offers to pay the mock candidate's election expenses, or if elected to procure some favour for him, or both. This technique has resulted in an extraordinary number of candidates contesting every election. In 1955 a total of 140 candidates from three parties contested 40 seats; in 1962 there were 302 for six parties and 50 seats. Thus voters, many of whom are illiterate, are faced with a bewildering choice of candidates arranged alphabetically on ballots that are sometimes three feet long.

Another way for a candidate to gather secondary votes is to exchange secondary preferences with a rival. Occasionally a candidate tries to play both ends against the middle. That is, he promises his second votes to more than one of his rivals in exchange for theirs. This works very well for him if his rivals are eliminated before he is, but if he goes first, the official record of the distribution of his votes soon shows up his duplicity.

While this system of voting assures representation to all shades of political opinion, it works in several ways against the development of a strong two-party system. To begin with, it is ideally suited to the needs of the traditional patron-politician with his own localized, semi-private political organization of canvassers, mock candidates and clients. The present system of voting in combination with this organization assures him that many votes will be funnelled in to him. In the past these personal organizations ensured the re-election of politicians even if they changed parties. In fact a politician's supporters sometimes encourage him

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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to switch to the party with best chance of success, for they know that if he is elected, he will channel patronage to them, often at the expense of the rest of his electoral district.

This system of voting also encourages contests between candidates from the same party. Such contests, carried out in public and in the heat of a campaign, often create hostility among the leaders of the party, and weaken its solidarity.

Finally, because this proportional system makes it possible for popular minority candidates to be elected, it encourages dissident factions to hive off from the major parties and found new ones. This seriously weakens the parent parties. Thus, although the only political division of real importance is that between the supporters of the Archbishop and those who favour Mintoff, there are now six political parties in Malta. It is not surprising therefore that the minority parties, and Miss Strickland's Progressive Constitutional Party in particular, are strongly in favour of retaining the present electoral system. Without it they would not be represented. The Malta Labour Party, which favours a strong two-party system, would prefer to see substituted an electoral system which would eliminate the smaller parties and strengthen the major parties. The Nationalist Party, although it would benefit from a change in the electoral system which would eliminate many of its rivals, has remained relatively silent on this point. This is because most of its leading members are patron-politicians of the old school. They owe their political life and the influence they command to the electoral system which has enabled them to build their own personal political organizations. The Nationalist Party is a party of respected and influential men, but in their strength lies its weakness. It is a party of politicians, rather than a politician's party. Dr. Borg Olivier, the Nationalist Prime Minister, is a first among equals; he does not lead his party in the sense that Mintoff leads the Malta Labour Party.

In short the Maltese system of proportional representation facilitates the emergence of minority parties. It also weakens the major parties by promoting intra-party rivalry and helping to keep alive the tradition of local patron-politicians. These factors militate against the development of a strong central government. It can be argued forcefully that Malta, which is facing a critical period in its economic and constitutional development, is now in greater need of a strong central government than ever before. It

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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Appendix B

Extracts from the 1962 Electoral Manifesto of the Malta Labour Party[1]

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The Malta Labour Party reaffirm their democratic socialist principles which do not run counter to Christian beliefs and solemnly subscribe to:

(1) the right of every nation, however small, to govern itself and to determine its own international relations in its own best interest and for the furtherance of its own progress and prosperity.

(2) freedom of conscience. This ensures for every citizen the right to exercise his own religious beliefs without hindrance and at the same time to fulfil his civic duties without pseudo-religious interference.

(3) the equality of all citizens before the law of the land. This implies not only the adherence to the Charter of Human Rights but also the abolition of medieval privileges which have retarded our own social and economic progress. Any interference with the right of a democratically elected majority to implement the people's mandate is a crime.

(4) equal opportunities to all citizens. This entails freedom of speech at public meetings, in the press, on the air, universal suffrage, free compulsory education, full employment and adequate social services from the cradle to the grave. Whilst the right to private ownership is by no means denied, the state must exercise the positive function of preventing any individual or group of individuals from dominating the heights of the nation's economy and dictating living standards to their fellow citizens. The Malta Labour Party firmly believe in the right of the people to have the final say in the nation's vital means of production. All forms

[1] Source: *The Voice of Malta*, 7 and 14 January 1962.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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665 of Co-operative and Social ownership should therefore be encouraged in order to curb the excesses of unbridled capitalism.

666 (5) Charter of the United Nations and the equality of all the human races – black, white or coloured. In particular Maltese Labour believe in the right of every nation to choose the method of government and the social system most consonant with its economic environment and its special political and social stage of development. The division of the world into two huge power blocs, the one intent on destroying the other, militates against world peace and the brotherhood of man. Whilst therefore communism with its anti-democratic suppression of freedom of conscience, freedom of association and other restrictive human rights earns Labour's unequivocal condemnation, the means chosen so far to combat it – namely nuclear weapons and military alliances are equally reprehensible. Labour believe in a reinvigorated United Nation's Organization able to enforce the principles embodied in the Charter through an international police force.

II. INDEPENDENCE

648 Since time immemorial our islands have been dominated by
665 foreign powers. Our people have not therefore been the custodians
666 of these fundamental human rights. On the contrary our social, political and economic institutions have been at the mercy of foreign masters who have fashioned them to suit their own requirements. . . .

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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642 constitutional status. The British Government had felt
648 unable to accept the Nationalists' request for Dominion
668 status and the transfer of responsibility for Malta from the Colonial to the Commonwealth Relations Office; but neither Party regarded as adequate the British counter-proposal for the removal of Maltese affairs from the Colonial to the Home Office. In 1954 the British Government suggested all-party talks, to be held in London, and Mr Mintoff accepted the suggestion on assuming office in February 1955.

64 Mr Mintoff now put forward the novel proposal that
668 Malta, while retaining its local autonomy and local Parliament (with power to legislate on all matters other than defence and external affairs), should be "integrated" with the United Kingdom and be represented in the House of Commons at Westminster by not fewer than three Members elected in accordance with United Kingdom electoral laws. The British Parliament's reaction to this interesting suggestion proving generally sympathetic, the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, announced in July 1955 that a Round Table Conference consisting of representatives of all political parties at Westminster would be convened for its consideration. The Round Table Conference of seventeen members (including Lord Attlee, Mr A. Bevan and Mr Clement Davies) under the Chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, held twelve plenary sessions in London and three in Malta. Its Report was published in December 1955.[1] The Conference concluded that Maltese representation at Westminster was "practicable and reasonable" and recommended its acceptance by Her Majesty's Government and Parliament if also accepted by the people of Malta.

64 A referendum to ascertain the wishes of the Maltese was
666 held—somewhat prematurely as was thought by some—on
668 the 11th and 12th February 1956. The figures of the referendum showed:

[1] As Command 9657.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

in favour of integration	67,607
against	20,177
invalid votes	2,559
votes cast	90,343

As the names on the Electoral Register totalled 152,583 the number of those who refrained from voting was 62,240; and it was assumed that most of the abstentions were due to the misgivings of the Church, which, if not openly hostile to the plan, was certainly not articulate in its favour. Obviously, too, the implications of the proposal far transcended purely constitutional issues: the entire Maltese economy was involved, with inevitable changes in the standard of living and economic consequences for good or ill difficult to forecast. Such terms as "parity" and "equivalence" were added to the slogans of the day.

Those opposed, for one reason or another, to Integration as propounded by Mr Mintoff argued that the poll, although showing a majority *of those voting* as in favour of the proposal, had certainly not resulted in the clear, unmistakable overall majority envisaged as necessary by the Round Table Conference. Her Majesty's Government shared this view to the extent of deciding that the Maltese electors should have another opportunity to pronounce themselves on the subject. On the 28th March 1956, after a debate in the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden announced the Government's intention of implementing the Round Table Conference Report in a Bill to be drafted in two parts, the first to contain a new Constitution for Malta, the second to deal with Maltese representation at Westminster. But the Maltese people would be enabled once more to declare their views on Integration at a General Election, to be held in Malta before the United Kingdom Bill finally became law.

The position, then, by the middle of 1956 was that under the constitutional arrangements proposed by the Round Table Conference and accepted by Her Majesty's

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Government the Maltese people would be represented, if they so decided in a General Election, by three Members at Westminster. They would keep their own Legislative Assembly with an enhanced measure of autonomy since a single Maltese Government would take the place of the existing Diarchy; only a reduced number of matters, mainly concerned with foreign affairs and defence, would remain the exclusive responsibility of the Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom. The Maltese Government would retain responsibility for taxation in Malta until such time as the Maltese economy was held to have reached a level comparable with that of the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile discussions between Her Majesty's Government and Mr Mintoff's Administration continued with fluctuating fortunes on the constitutional, economic and financial aspects of the Integration policy. Here the perennial difficulty remained: the conception of "economic equivalence" which Mr Mintoff had been holding out to his supporters as the indispensable accompaniment of Integration and sought to impose on Her Majesty's Government. Negotiations were heading towards a deadlock when in April 1957 a new element of difficulty was injected into the situation by the visit to Malta of the British Minister of Defence. Mr Sandys's announcement that the changes in British Defence policy and their consequential cuts in Defence expenditure would affect the Dockyard, Malta's greatest single employer of labour, created serious anxiety despite the reassurance in the Minister's statement that in any future war Malta would no longer be, as she had been in the last one, "in the very centre of the European battle area."

The anxiety was real, widespread and justified, for over 13,000 Maltese are in regular employment in the Dockyard out of a national working population of just under 83,000 and are the wage-earners for a very considerable proportion of the total population. The Dockyard has always been, in Mr Lennox-Boyd's phrase, "the industrial